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INTRODUCTION

When my business partner and good friend Tom Coxon and I first discussed making our own “monster collector” game, we didn’t do so with a clear idea in mind. It actually took a lot of brainstorming to end up with “Cassette Beasts”! Our underlying principle was that this is a popular genre to develop a game for, and that it would be a lot of fun to get to work on one. Ideas don’t manifest fully formed - they take time to develop! Over the months and years, the true vision for this world we wanted to create began to solidify.

From the start, we didn’t want Cassette Beasts to be too derivative - we wanted it to stand alone and feel wholly its own thing. The weird premise at the heart of it helps: a world where people record monsters onto cassette tapes and play those back with cassette players to transform. A focus on characters was something I was very keen on from early on, and the “humans transforming into monsters” concept allowed the human element of the game to stay at the forefront. The monster forms thus kind of become extensions of the characters, and the player, as an avenue of self-expression. In theory, that is!

From the autumn of 2019 through to early 2023, I have been sketching and drawing monsters for Cassette Beasts. If I may be self-indulgent for a moment, I would say it’s an assignment I’ve been training for my whole life. I was introduced to certain Japanese monster-collecting RPG franchises at just the right age in my young life that I feel it permanently rewired my brain: I would live to draw my own monsters forevermore! To say that I’ve been privileged to be able to make a living doing so, if at least for this window of time, would be an understatement.

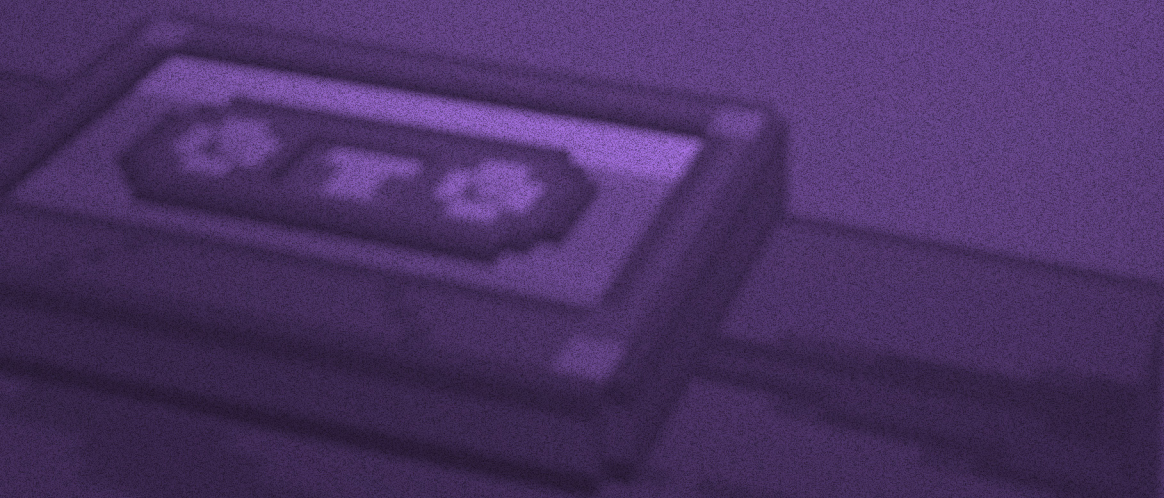
This art book documents much of the development work I’ve put into Cassette Beasts over the last several years (as of writing), but to imply that it is all my work would be incorrect. Much in the way that the denizens of Harbourn town combine their efforts to maintain their community, the art of Cassette Beasts has been a group effort from the beginning. Whether that be the many suggestions, prompts and points of feedback from Tom, or the direct contributions from our animators and guest artists, I see the influence of others throughout the game’s visuals. I’m proud of what we’ve made together!

As of writing, I do not know yet what the legacy of Cassette Beasts will be. Like any game developer, I’d like to hope it becomes successful and remembered fondly! In the game’s story, the characters are sort of “frozen in time” - plucked from moments in their own lives and marooned in a world that exists outside of time. In many ways, creating art is also like this - the aspirations, characters, creatures and stories that we made for this game will exist in stasis, forever able to be revisited from the future. I wonder what I will think of this world many years from now?

Anyway, enough of that! I hope you enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at our game.

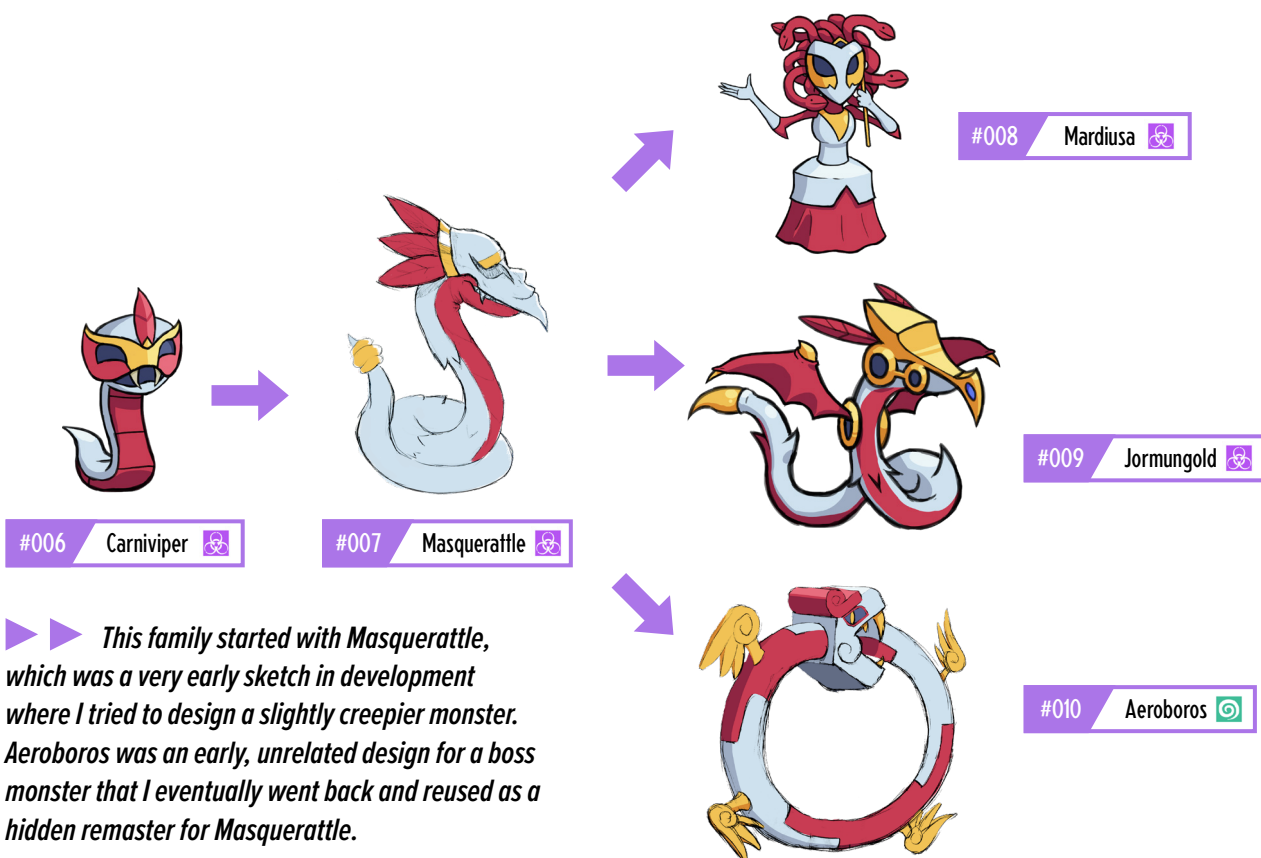
Jay Baylis
Art Director @ Bytten Studio
March 2023

BESTIARY





▶▶ Springheel was one of the earliest monster designs I drew - a rough sketch of an imp-like creature inspired by the English folklore character "Springheeled Jack". I wanted to create an irritating, antagonistic monster that you could encounter a lot in the early game, but wanted to give its design a bit of a British influence. Its remastered forms also pull from British culture in a similar fashion.

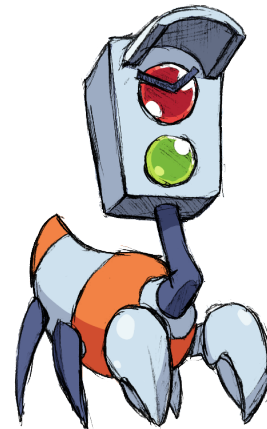


▶▶ This family started with Masquerattle, which was a very early sketch in development where I tried to design a slightly creepier monster. Aeroboros was an early, unrelated design for a boss monster that I eventually went back and reused as a hidden remaster for Masquerattle.

►► Traffikrab was the very first monster I drew for *Cassette Beasts*, and also ends up being the very first you see in the game. In many ways it's the perfect representation of my design philosophy, combining the artificial with nature in a simple but memorable form. We're very fond of Traffikrab! Its remastered forms are designed to contrast with Traffikrab's short, squat stature.



#011 Traffikrab



#012 Weevilite



#013 Lobstacle



Magikrab

►► Magikrab is a special version who appears as a character in the game.





#015 Malchemy



#016 Miasmodeus



#014 Candevil



#017 Vendemon



#018 Gumbaal

►► Being one of our two “starter monsters” alongside Bansheep, Candevil was a real challenge to come up with. These two monsters were designed to fit well as a set, as well as represent the aesthetic direction of all the monsters in the game. Between the two of them you have a kind of “angel and devil” dichotomy that fits the folkloric nature of many of the game’s monsters. Candevil is ultimately my favourite in the whole game!



#019 Bansheep



#020 Wooltergeist



#021 Ramtasm

►► Bansheep was designed after Candevil, hence it appearing second in the bestiary. I went through a lot of very different takes on a ghost themed monster before arriving at Bansheep. Everything about it screams goth or “emo” - even the black pattern up its arms look like long-sleeved gloves. I quite like how different Ramtasm and Capricorpse appear to each other!



#022 Zombleat

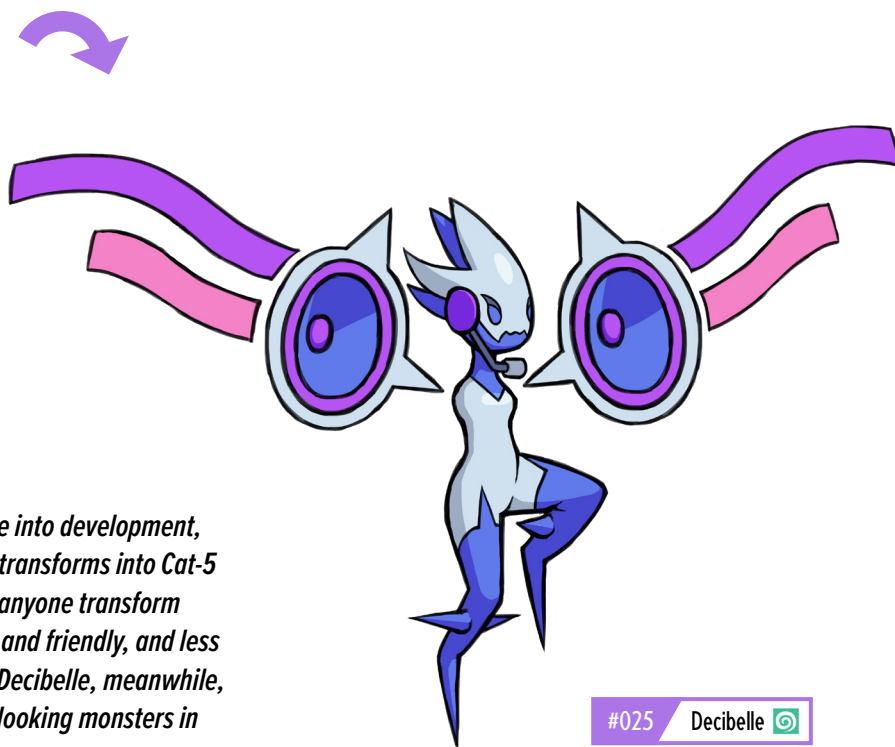


#023 Capricorpse



#024 Sirenade

►► Sirenade's design came fairly late into development, which is why in our early trailers Kayleigh transforms into Cat-5 instead. As the first monster form you see anyone transform into, Sirenade is designed to look very fun and friendly, and less "animal-like" than most of the monsters. Decibelle, meanwhile, ends up being one of the most impressive looking monsters in the game. Its in-game sprite is huge!

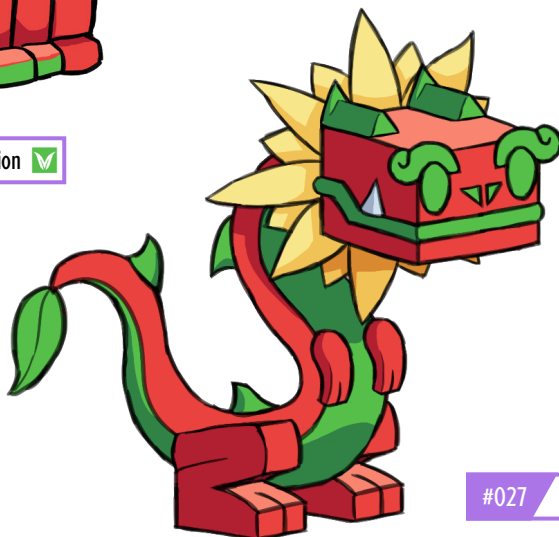


#025 Decibelle



#026 Dandylion

►► Dandylion was the first Plant-type designed, and therefore one of the first monsters. My feelings are that many plant-based monster designs in RPGs tend to be cute and non-threatening, and I really wanted to establish early on that you can have powerful plant-themed monsters. Based on Chinese guardian lion statues, Dandylion's name is also probably one of the best puns in the game.



#027 Blossomaw



#028 Macabra 🐸



#029 Folklord 🐸

►► Macabra and Folklord are based on North American “cryptids” - creatures that are rumoured to exist, but have never been proven to. The former is based on the “Chupacabra”, while the latter is based on giant cryptids like the “Bigfoot” or “Sasquatch”.



#030 Dominoth 🦋



#031 Wingloom ⚡



#032 Mothmanic ⚡



#033 Tokusect 🦋

►► Dominoth was designed out of necessity - we needed a monster that the player could receive the “mothwing” ability from, and so I designed Dominoth. Its name actually comes from the “Domino mask”, a small mask that one wears around the eyes, that is often associated with superheroes. Running with the Superhero theme, Tokusect is inspired by Japanese “Tokusatsu” live action superheroes whereas Wingloom is more of an American comic book superhero pastiche. Mothmanic, however, is based on the cryptid “Mothman”.



#034 Squirey 🐾



#035 Manispear ⚙️

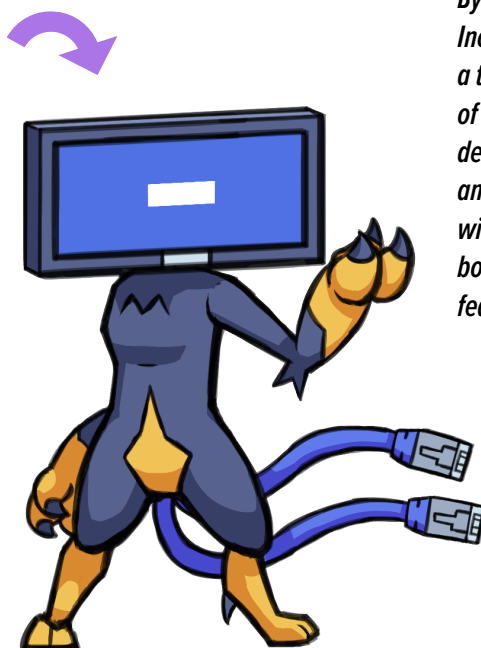


#036 Palangolin ⚙️

►► Palangolin was designed first here, as I wanted a cool, bipedal warrior monster in our roster early on. Squirey was designed as a “first stage” form with Manispear as a “black knight” alternative remaster. The idea, ultimately, being that Squirey is a knight-in-training who either becomes a righteous warrior or an evil one.



#037 Kittelly ⚡

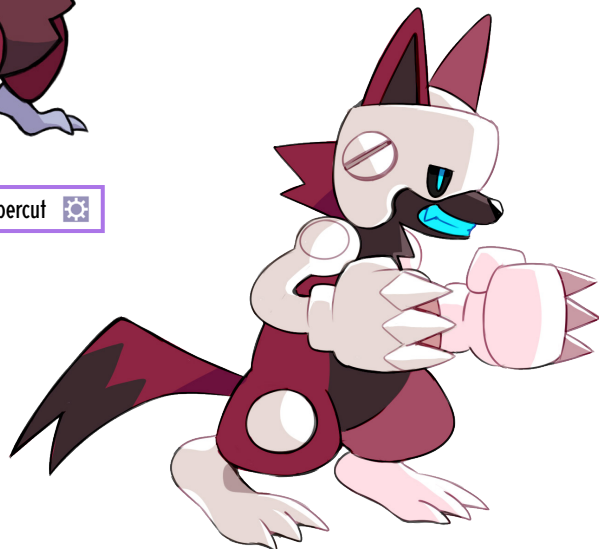


#038 Cat-5 ⚡

►► Cat-5 was designed very early on as a sort of homage to a boss monster from Bytten Studio’s previous game, Lenna’s Inception. The game featured a cat with a television for a head, and Cat-5 is kind of carrying on that tradition! Kittelly was designed after, featuring an older black-and-white television head to contrast with its final form. I like to think these are both very different from “cat monsters” featured in other games!



#039 Puppercut ⚙️



#040 Southpaw ⚙️

▶▶ Southpaw was designed by artist Sami Briggs, with the request that she design a monster that is very cool looking. I adore Southpaw and think it's one of the most memorable designs in our roster! I designed Puppercut later as a more awkward, less impressive "first-stage" form for Southpaw. Whereas Southpaw's white metal armour is sleek and unblemished, Puppercut is covered in rust. How unfortunate!



#041 Bulletino 🔥



#042 Velocirifle 🔥



#043 Artillerex 🔥



#044 Gearyu ⚙️

▶▶ Artillerex was one of the earliest designs and was drawn to establish what the upper bounds for a monster's height could be. It towers over most monsters in the game! In the end it ended up being the third tallest - the crown going to Gearyu. Gearyu was, uniquely, actually designed and animated as a 3D model first, which took an enormous amount of time for me to clean up for its sprite animation. I think it was worth it!

#045 Diveal 

►► Diveal was another monster designed out of necessity - we needed a swimming-themed monster to give the player the ability to swim. There's nothing too interesting about these two, although Scubalrus is one of the few monsters in the game that is longer than it is tall. I don't tend to design quadrupedal monsters - mostly because it's quite difficult to draw four-legged creatures correctly!

#046 Scubalrus #047 Nevermort 

►► Nevermort is a pretty straightforward design, a raven with a plague doctor mask. Apocrowlypse, meanwhile, is a bit more elaborate. It is structured like a winged horse, with a skull belt around its midriff giving it the silhouette of a cloaked figure on a skeletal steed. The position of its knees is kind of confusing, much to the chagrin of our animator Michael!

#048 Apocrowlypse 



#049 Clocksley



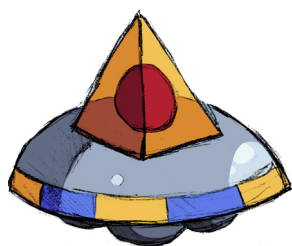
#050 Robindam

►► I had the idea of a clockwork toy monster based on Robin Hood since very early on in the project but it took me a long time to finally come up with a design I liked for it. The idea behind this one is that it goes from a basic old-fashioned toy to a much more modern one - namely, a mecha model kit. I think remastering Clocksley into Robindam is going to surprise a lot of players!



#051 Thwackalope

►► Another early design, the Thwackalope is based on the Jackalope, a creature of North American folklore. The pole it wields has a chunk of rock on the end, as if it was a pole or fence post the Thwackalope ripped out of the ground.



#052 Allseer ⚙️

▶▶ Allseer is inspired by the Eye of Providence, or All-Seeing Eye - a piece of iconography depicting an eye in a triangle or pyramid. This led to designing a UFO with an ancient Egyptian motif, which carried on to both of its remastered forms, also inspired by the Martians in "The War of the Worlds". It either remasters into the towering metal Triphinx, or the squid-like alien Khufu!



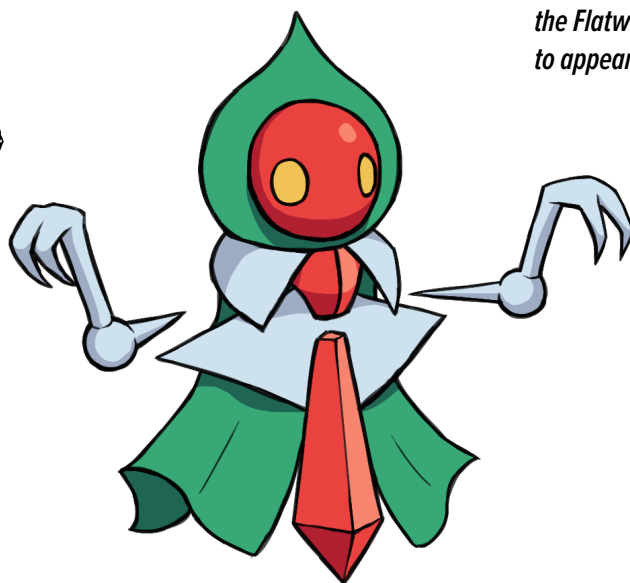
#053 Khufu 🐙



#054 Triphinx ⚙️



#055 Braxsuit 🌀



#056 Flapwoods 🌀

▶▶ This is a fairly straightforward two-stage monster family based on the "Flatwoods Monster", a cryptid seen in West Virginia in the 1950's. I utterly adore the Flatwoods Monster's strange design and knew it had to appear in *Cassette Beasts* from the very beginning!



#057 Sanzetime



#058 Fortiwinx

►► Sanzetime is based on an hourglass, with sand spilling out to form a crude body. This one started with the idea that the top half of an hourglass could give the silhouette of a head, and developed from there. Fortiwinx's "gas mask" face is a slight homage that I'll let you figure out for yourself!

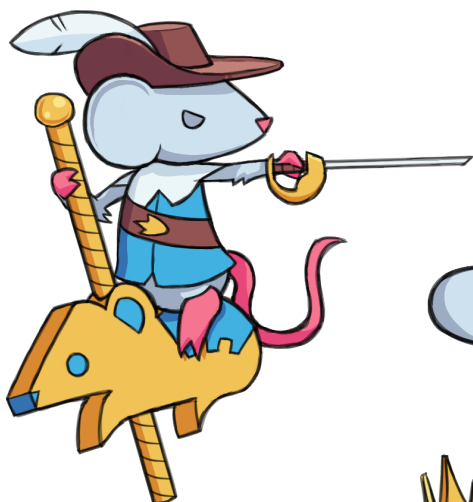


#059 Salamagus

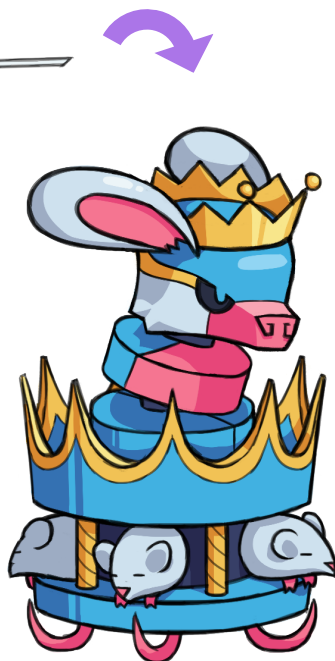


#060 Pyromeleon

►► Pyromeleon was designed first - and is once again heavily based on a monster from Lenna's Inception - with Salamagus coming after. I quite enjoyed designing a fire duo that leans more into a more "mystical" fire theming. Oh - and the big sacs on Salamagus' head aren't its eyes!



#061 Muskrateer 🐭



#062 Ratcounsel 🐭

►► Muskrateer is a fairly straightforward cute little monster - I almost feel bad that it remasters into a monster form that's huge and slightly creepy. Muskrateer deserves a more "normal" remastered form! Maybe one day...



#063 Padpole 🐸



#064 Frillypad 🐸



#065 Liligator 🐸

►► Another design by Sami Briggs, Frillypad started with a request for a non-standard "frog-like" monster design. From Frillypad, I designed Padpole and Liligator respectively. They're broadly themed after various river and lake spirits from European folklore.



#066 Elfless ❄️



#067 Grampus ❄️



#068 Faerious ❄️

▶▶ *Elfless is a Christmas elf - in the game, it will vanish in a cloud of mist if it spots you approaching. I think this mostly came about because I wanted a monster inspired by the European folkloric figure "Krampus", which is a sort of anti-Santa Claus. Faerious is a hidden remaster and leans much more into the "elf" theming with a design inspired by RPG game characters.*

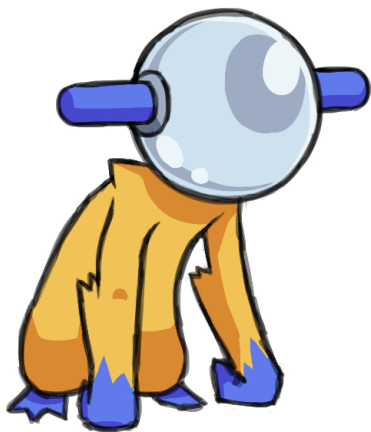


#069 Brushroom ✅



#070 Fungogh ✅

▶▶ *This duo combines an "artist" theme with mushrooms, and in the game has a unique move that lets you change the typing of your opponents. Fungogh wields its paintbrush like a martial arts warrior - a pretty weird monster!*



#071 Boltam ⚡



#072 Plasmantler ⚡

▶▶ Plasmantler was a very early monster sketch I drew for a monster design that would look strange or alien. Boltam was later drawn as an early stage form for it. This line is pretty important in the game, as it gives you the magnetism ability.



#073 Busheye ✓




#074 Hunttorch ✓

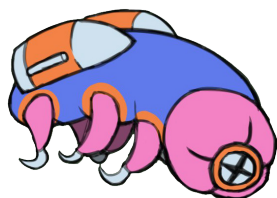


#075 Hedgeherne ✓

▶▶ Hedgeherne came first here, being inspired by the English folklore figure “Herne the Hunter”. Its earlier stages were then drawn later, with Busheye serving the purpose in the game of looking a lot like a regular bush - if you run into it, you’ll find yourself surprised!

#076 Terracooka #077 Coaldron 

►► Terracooka was the first Earth-type monster designed. Its design is based on ancient Japanese “Dogū” statues, with a chef theme thrown in. Coaldron sees its whole body adapt to become a massive cooking pot, able to shoot its hot broth at enemies. I don’t know why you’d want to transform into that, personally.

#078 Stardigrade #079 Galagor 

►► Stardigrade was the first Astral-type monster, and is also my personal most-hated design. I hate to see it! However, some people seem to like it, so it made it into the game. Galagor, meanwhile, is designed to look kind of like a cartoon space alien - like something you might see on the side of an arcade cabinet, or perhaps a 1980’s scifi cartoon.

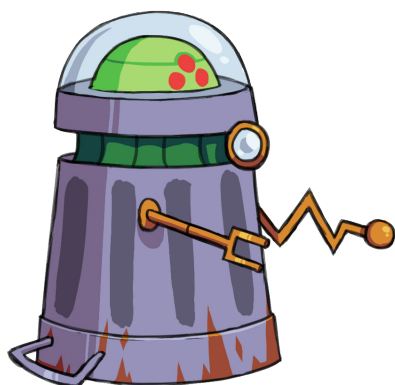


#080 Mascotoy

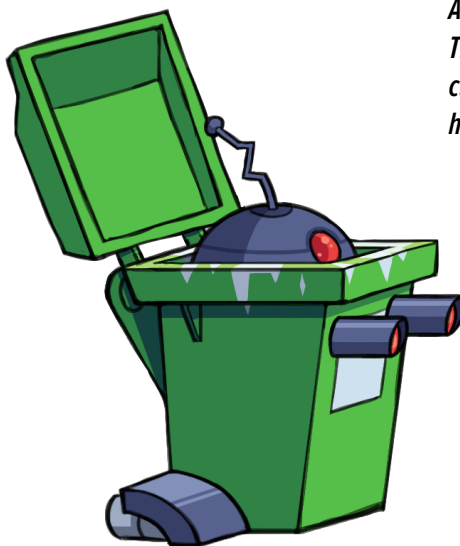


#081 Mascotorn

►► *Mascotoy is designed to be a creepy mascot outfit, complete with a missing arm and stuffing coming out of the hole. Some people may question why this monster is Plastic-type, but Mascotoy is made of nylon and polyester - both plastics! Its remastered form continues its degradation, and has completely torn apart, barely resembling a costume anymore.*

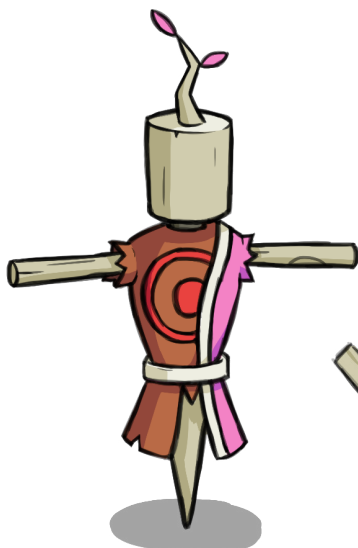


#082 Binvader



#083 Binterloper

►► *Binvader and Binterloper are both "aliens in bins", the former being a classic metal "trash can" and the latter being a British "wheelie bin". I suspect there are a lot of regional differences between Europe and America when it comes to bins and their names. These monsters are homages to a particular pop culture alien that is immediately identifiable here in the United Kingdom!*



#084 Twirligig ✓



#085 Kirikuri ✓

►► Kirikuri was an early monster design, based on Japanese “Karakuri” puppets. It may have once been used for training, given its archery target shield and wooden practice sword. The hat it wears on its head is a “Fukāmigasa”, a wicker hat that covers most of the face. Twirligig came later, and was designed to be a much less impressive “practice dummy”.



#086 Jellyton ☠

►► Jellyton is my take on a “slime monster” - its body is made of sludge and bones! I think the big arms give Jellyton a very strong silhouette.



#087 Spirouette



#088 Regensea

►► A nautical-themed water monster was something I knew I wanted in this slot, but it took a lot of revisions to come up with a design that I liked. Originally Regensea's design was much closer to Spirouette, but I went back and redesigned it, very late into development, to look much more unique.



#089 Jumpkin



#090 Beanstalk

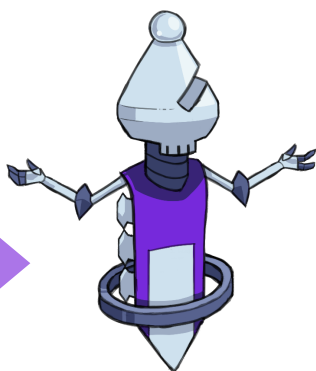


#091 Draculeaf

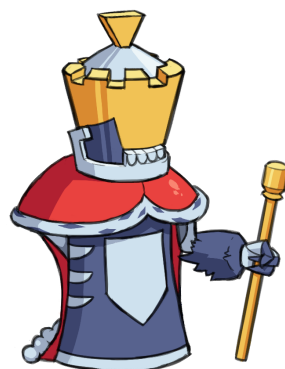
►► Jumpkin was designed by Sami Briggs, as a "cute" monster for the roster. Bytten Studio uses a pumpkin for its logo so this design was very welcome! Given that it has slight "halloween" vibes with its fang and bat-like leaf ears, I leaned into the spooky side of it for its two remasters.



#092 Pawndead



#093 Skelevangelist



#094 Kinggrave



#095 Queenyx

▶▶ Since I wanted a lot of “branching paths” for remasters in *Cassette Beasts*, a chess-themed family that ended with either a king or queen was a logical choice early on. I quite appreciate that this is an Earth-type set of monsters that doesn’t lean too hard into visual earth motifs - though the skeleton theming helps sell their type.



#096 Burnace



#097 Smogmagog

▶▶ The last Fire-types drawn for the game, *Burnace* and *Smogmagog* lean into a “factory” aesthetic to try and set them apart from previous Fire-types in the roster. I feel like *Smogmagog* is a particularly strong design - its enormous burly arms and tiny legs make it feel very top-heavy!



#098 Faucetear 



#099 Fountess 

►► Fountess was designed for us by artist Jenna Brown, and is one of my favourites in the whole game. The way Jenna posed the showerhead to look like a wide-brimmed summer hat is an incredibly strong design choice! I designed Faucetear after the fact, as a first-stage form for Fountess.

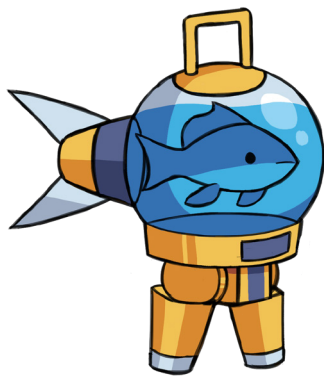


#100 Cluckabilly 



#101 Rockertrice 

►► Cluckabilly was the last monster I designed for Cassette Beasts! I had previously designed Rockertrice as a punk rock "cockatrice", a mythical creature which is best described as a rooster dragon. Cluckabilly was tough to design, because making a chicken look imposing is quite difficult.

#102 Pondwalker #103 Sharktanker 

►► I can't entirely recall why I designed a monster that is a fish in a fishbowl on legs. This one doesn't really look like a "Cassette Beast" like the rest - but maybe that's why I like it! Giving a regular shark robot arms and legs is quite a scary proposition, huh?

#104 Pombomb #105 Spitzfyre 

►► Pombomb was an early design for a "cute" monster and has since stuck around to be something of a mascot for Cassette Beasts. My original sketch doesn't seem that cute compared to its sprite and promotional art! Spitzfyre is very similar and equally cute on purpose - I figured that players would be disappointed to remaster it only for it to lose its charm. I suspect Pombomb is going to be one of the more popular monsters.



#106 Icepeck ❄️

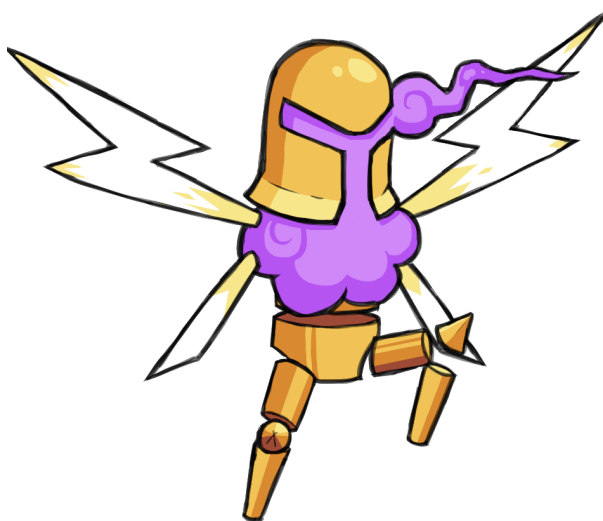


#107 Cryoshear ❄️

▶▶ Cryoshear was a very early monster sketch that made its way to the final game. Both of these designs are kind of abstract birds - the jump from Icepeck to Cryoshear is quite a surprising one!



#108 Sparktan ⚡️



#109 Zeustrike ⚡️

▶▶ Sparktan and Zeustrike are based on thunderclouds, with a soft Roman or Greek inspired design. I think their thunderbolt arms really come alive in their animated forms!

►► Kuneko is one of the few monsters where only one of her exists in the world - she's an individual, not a species! For reasons I won't spoil, she's designed to look like a cringy anime character, and I leaned into this as much as I could. Ninja outfit, cat ears, angel AND devil wings... she's the full package. Naturally, her second stage is simply her powered up. I wanted Kuneko to be simultaneously goofy and cool at the same time.



#110 Kuneko



#111 Shining Kuneko



#112 Djinn Entonic

►► Djinn Entonic began with a pun name from Tom (something not uncommon) and a design developed from there.



#113 Arkidd ⚡

▶▶ Arkidd was designed by Sami Briggs with a request for a “radical 90’s” inspired monster design. Its proportions and bright colours call to mind the video-game and cartoon character designs that were popular in the 1990’s. Radical!



#114 Undyin 💧

▶▶ Undyin was the first Water-type monster I designed, and I wanted to design a monster that was much more humanoid and horror-inspired than you may otherwise expect from a “water” theme. Undyin calls to mind a ghost from a gothic horror story - and its still one of my favourite designs in the game!



#115

Spooki-onna



►► Spooki-onna is a very straightforward depiction of a a *yōkai* (Japanese folklore spirit) called a *Yuki-onna*. The *Yuki-onna* (meaning “snow woman”) is a beautiful woman associated with mountains, snow and blizzards. I thought it’d be quite interesting to have such a humanoid monster design in the game!



#116

Khepri



►► Khepri is directly based on the ancient Egyptian god of the sun, who is depicted as a scarab or a scarab-faced figure. A very rare monster found late into the game, Khepri’s most notable design feature is its ability to fold its “wings” over its “legs” and eye, leaving it as a perfect scarab shape. Satisfying!

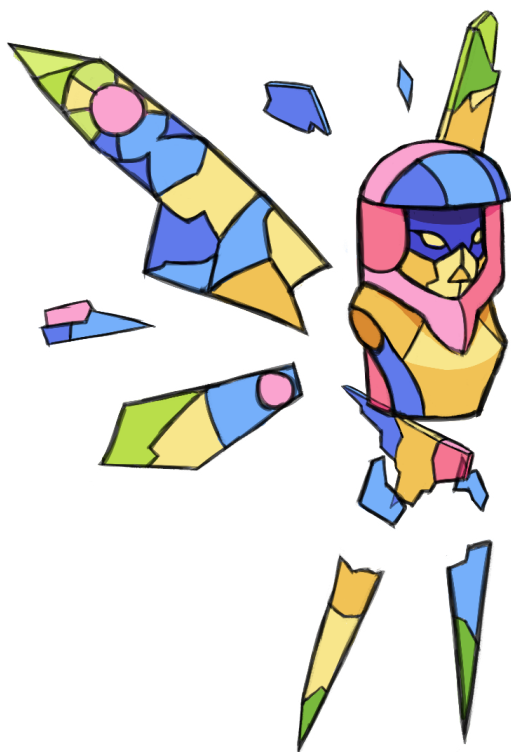


#117

Averevoir



►► Averevoir is very specific reference - it is a “Liver bird”, a mythical bird associated with the English city of Liverpool. Images of this bird are all over the city, but two famous statues of it on top of a building inspired the tower that Averevoir is drawn standing on. Its signature ability causes the tower to rise up and encase Averevoir - the only monster in the game to have an explicit “form change” ability like this!

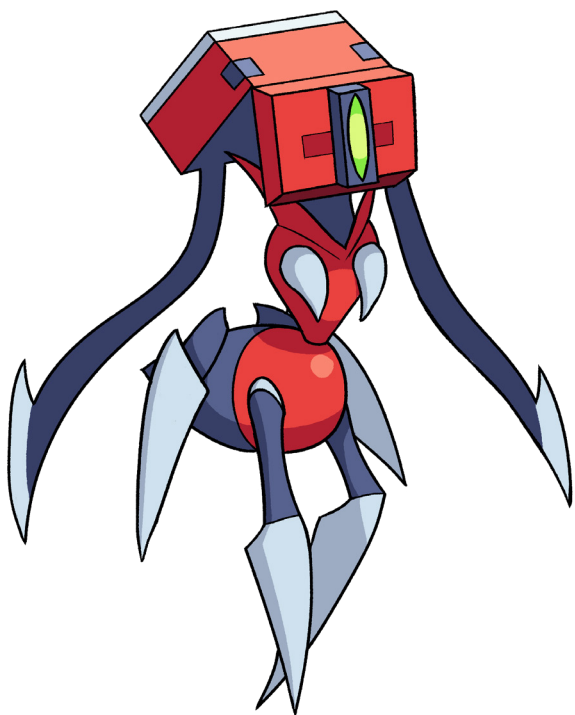


#118

Glaistain



►► Glaistain is loosely based on the “glaistig”, a ghost or fairy from Scottish mythology. Glaistain is a unique monster in the game for two reasons - it is a “one-of-a-kind”, with the player only encounter the one Glaistain rather than multiple, and it’s the only natural “Glass-type” monster. It is encountered in a unique area that is befitting of its stained-glass inspired design.



#119

Miss Mimic



▶▶ Miss Mimic is another unique monster, this time being our take on a classic RPG “mimic” creature that disguises itself as a treasure chest! Since the “treasure chests” in *Cassette Beasts* are the metal red item caches you find in the world, our mimic creature has a red and silver colour scheme. She also has spiky pointed feet - this is a common motif in the monsters of *Cassette Beasts*, and it is entirely because I cannot draw feet very well.



#120

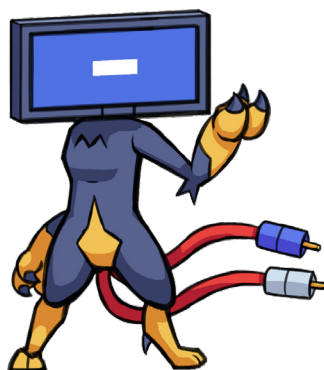
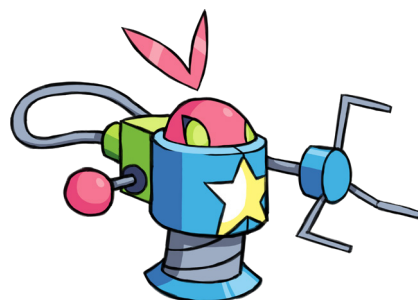
Anathema



▶▶ Anathema is the last monster in the bestiary, appearing later in the game for plot reasons. Anathema is meant to be a kind of “Frankenstein’s monster”, sown together from various different monsters. Its asymmetrical, stitched together appearance is intended to contrast with the more natural (if not strange) fusion monsters you encounter across the game.

Unused Designs

►► *Designing a big set of monsters for a game about recording monsters is, well, a big task! It took me several years to finish the bestiary for **Cassette Beasts 1.0**, and in that time I went through a lot of designs. This meant that a lot of sketches and illustrations I drew didn't make the final cut! Here's a selection of designs that didn't end up as official monsters.*

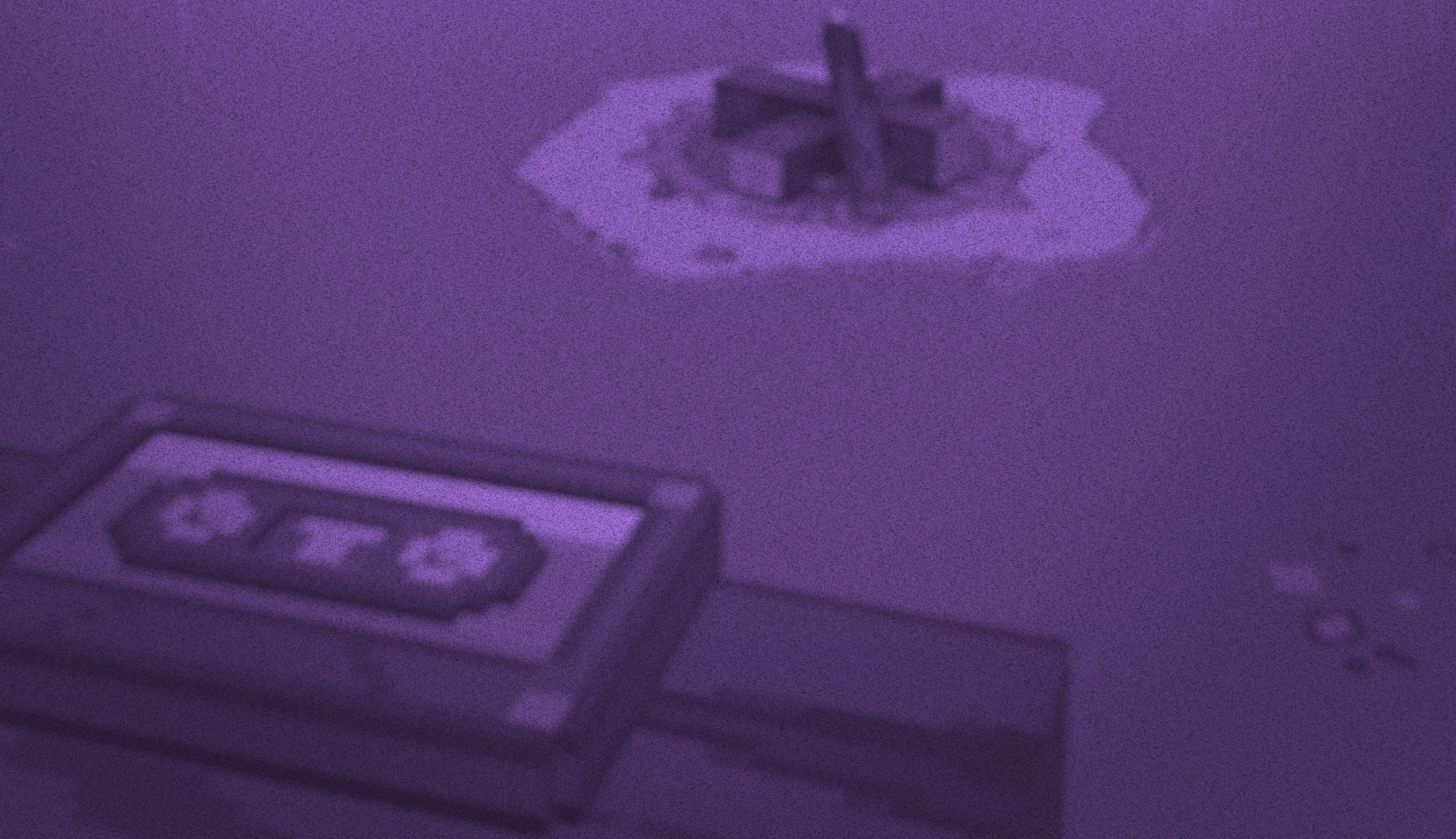




►► There are a lot of reasons that might lead to a design not making its way into the roster. Some of them might fulfill a purpose that was filled better by another monster (for example, several of these were options for the “starter tape” you receive in the game) while others just didn’t look quite good enough. Several designs shown here are beta designs for monsters that did make their way in - I’m sure you can identify those!

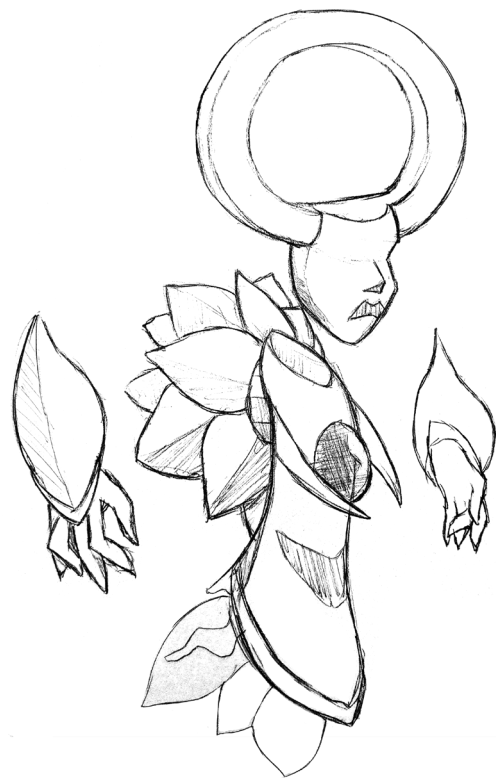


ARCHANGELS

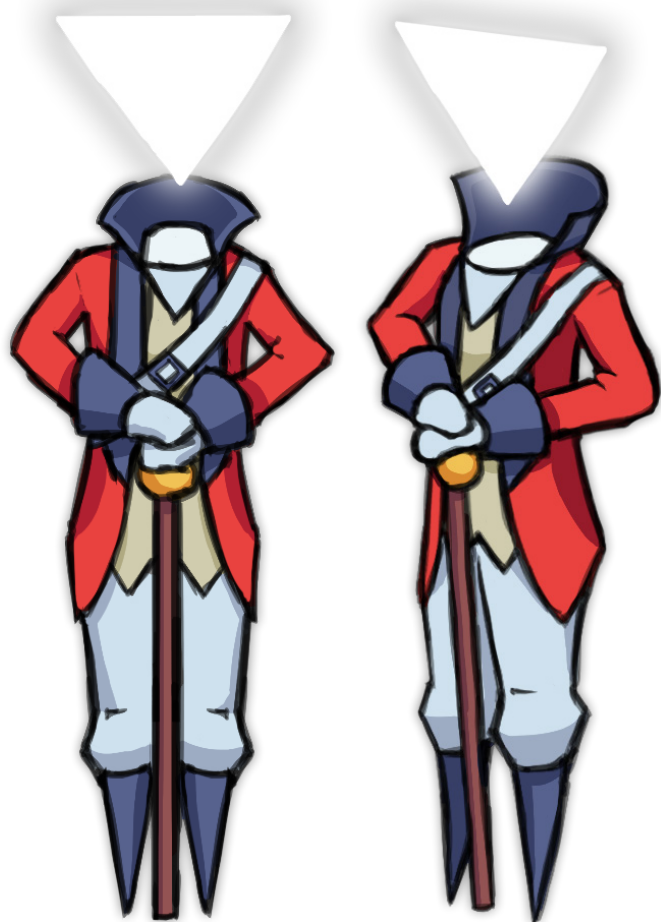


Morgante

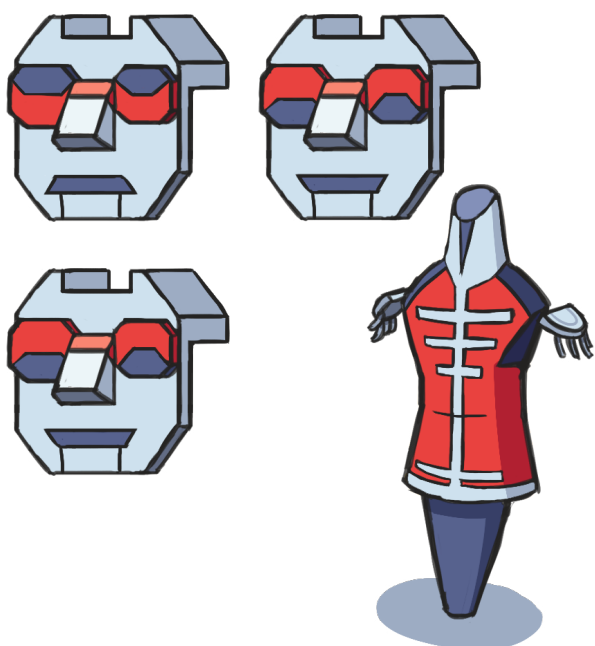
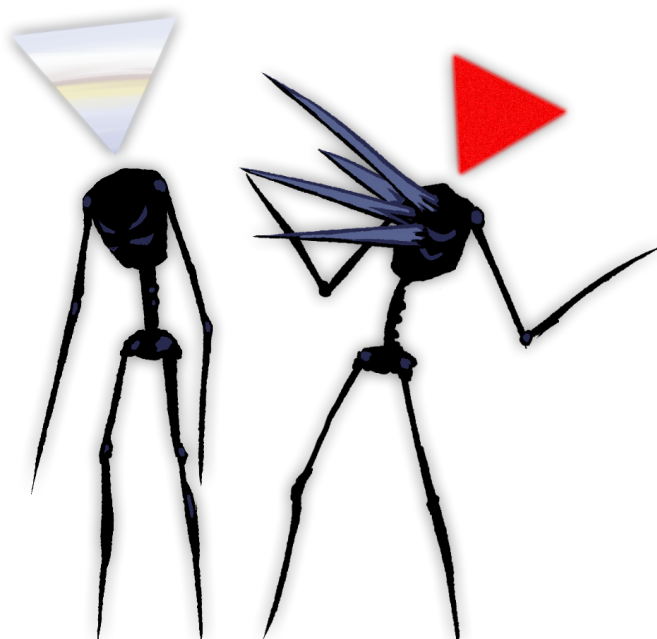
►► Morgante is the first Archangel the player meets, and her design needed to sell Archangels as powerful, frightening, and entirely unlike the “regular” monsters of New Wirral. She appears in two forms: the humanoid form, from the player character’s dreams, is her true self, whilst the form that she is in when first encountered is hulking, monstrous and heavily wounded. This is to represent her as she is at the end of a thousand years of endless battle beneath the island.



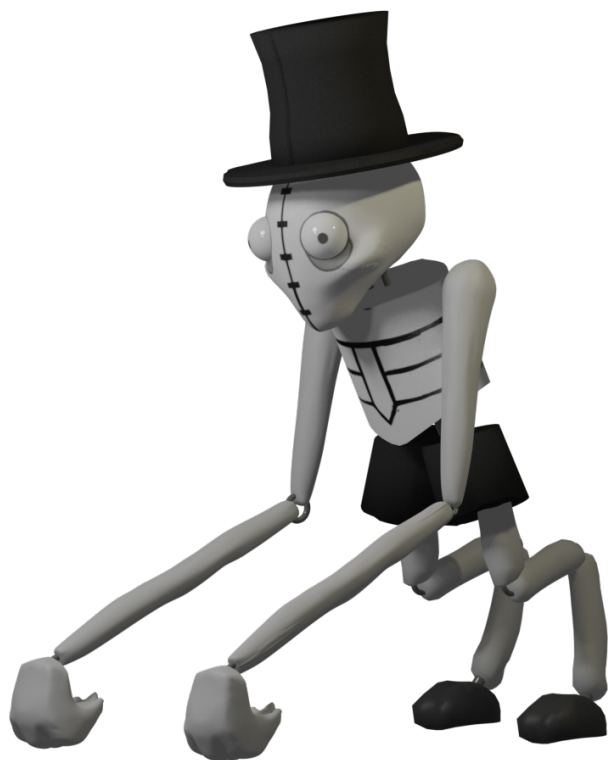
Aleph



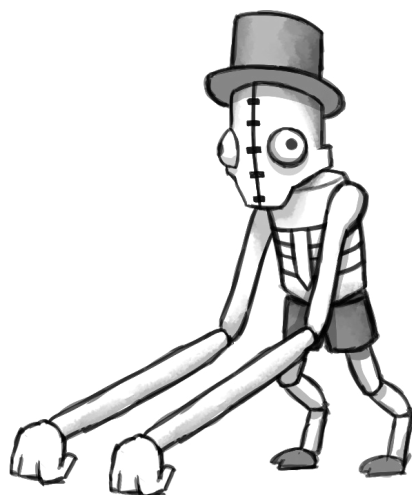
▶▶ Aleph, or the “Triangle Man”, is another humanoid Archangel with plot relevance. His final design has him wearing a redcoat outfit (an old British military outfit) which hints at his true nature, whilst his geometric floating triangle head means it is not possible to read his expression. In the past he may also have had a more intimidating form, but his “present day” design depicts him as tall and thin.



Poppetox



►► The other Archangels of New Wirral are meant to be “newer” - they come in various shapes and sizes intended to make them look truly alien and out of place. Not all of the Archangels were designed with concept art, and the ones that did ended up changing quite a bit once they made it into the game!



Robin Goodfellow

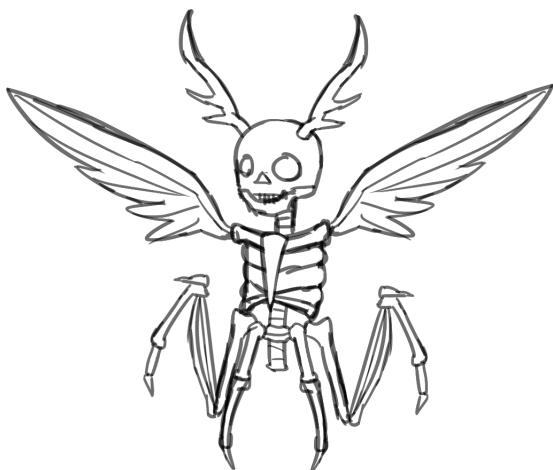


►► Robin Goodfellow is designed to look like the art found in the margins of European medieval manuscripts - or “marginalia”. Each frame is digitally painted from scratch to give him a strange, flowing appearance in motion.



Lamento Mori

►► *Lamento Mori was the first Archangel designed and also the first to be shown off in a trailer. Its appearance in the game is made from a collage of old illustrations and diagrams of the human skeleton and animal parts. I think this left an impression when we showed it off all those years ago!*



Babelith

►► *Hey, this concept art looks like a terrible child's drawing - what gives?! I really wanted Babelith to look like a child's crayon drawing come to life. In the game, Babelith is actually a 3D model with a shader on it that makes it look like a crayon scribble. One of the stranger Archangels!*

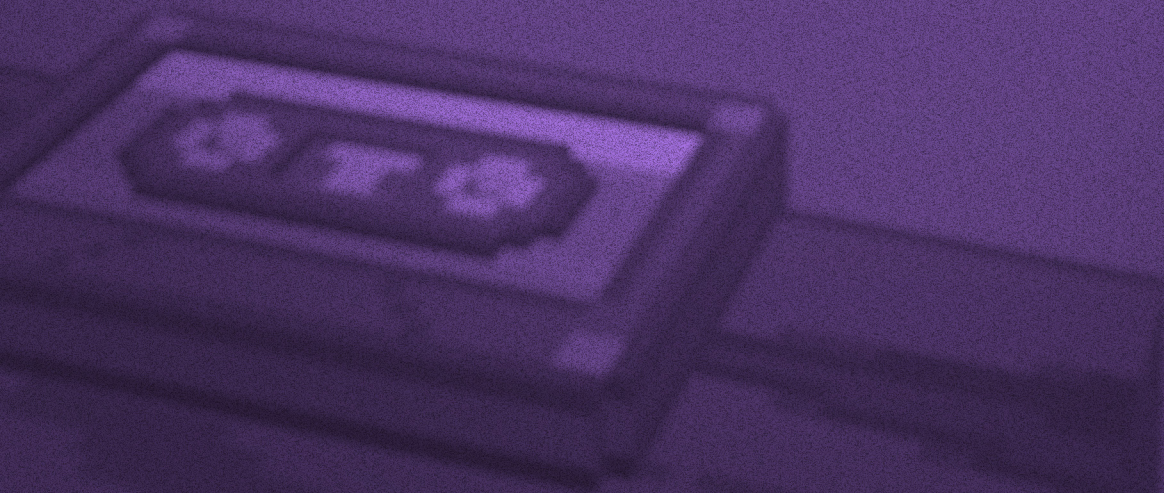


Mourningstar

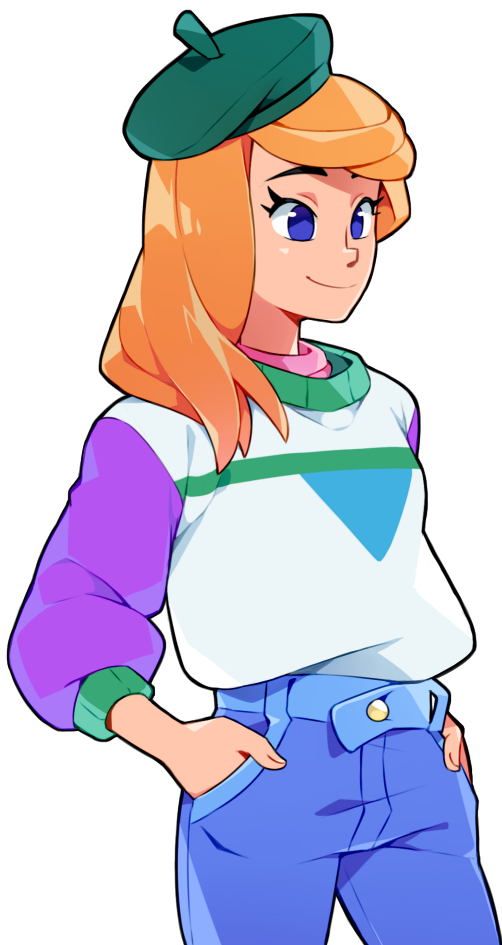
►► *Mourningstar is maybe the most stereotypical "RPG boss" design of the lot - this is an intentional decision! I wanted to mimic the appearance of early 3D models in RPGs from the 32-bit era, and design a character that is as strange and abstract as some of those could be. Despite its humanoid "head", its actual head is the snake.*



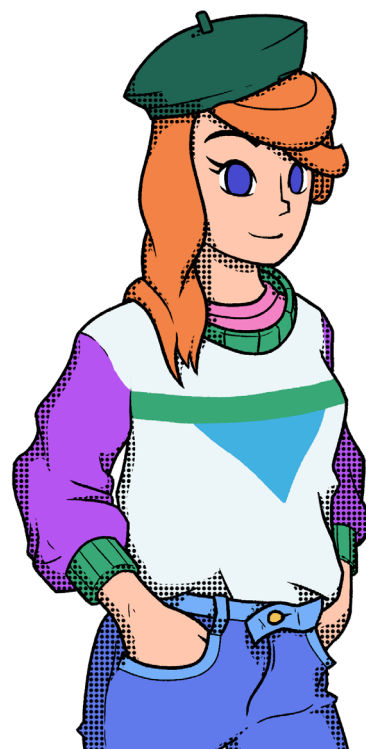
COMPANIONS



Kayleigh



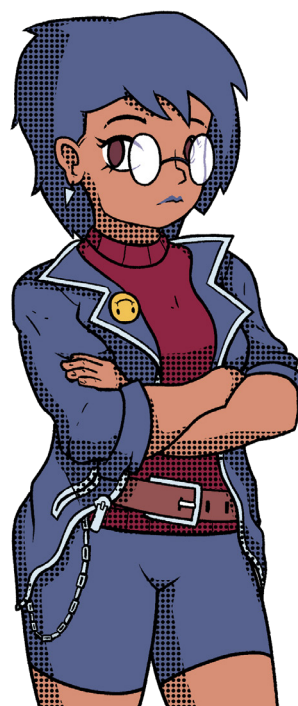
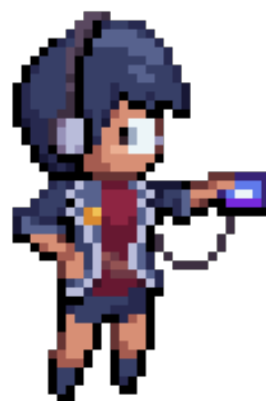
▶▶ The partner characters act as your companions throughout the game, so a lot of time was spent defining each of their designs. Kayleigh is the first person you encounter in the game, so her outfit and personality needed to represent the game more than anyone else. Her big jumper and beret give her a fun 1980's fashion flair, whilst her personality is very welcoming and informal. She ended up as something of a "main character" for the game, appearing in our primary key art and featuring heavily in trailers. Sami Briggs, who illustrated all the portraits, did a fantastic job on rendering all the characters based on my rougher sketches!



Meredith



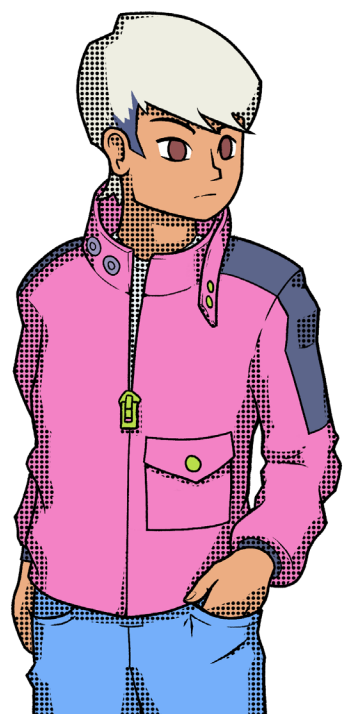
► ► Meredith was the very first character I sketched for the game - you can see my original illustration on this page! I wanted her to have a sarcastic personality, and her goth outfit helps her contrast a lot with the much more extroverted Kayleigh. Because of her fed up demeanour and sardonic remarks, she ended up being my favourite character to write in the game!



Eugene



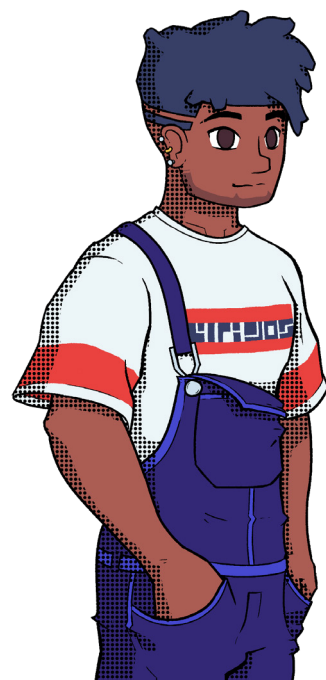
►► Eugene, it could be said, is someone who imagines himself to be the protagonist of this story. His jacket, dyed hair, and stance are that of someone who really wants everyone to see him as a cool guy. As well as a 1980's vibe, his appearance almost feels a little "sci-fi" - fittingly so, as the only companion who comes from a future earth.



Felix



▶▶ Whilst Eugene is a hothead, Felix is a lot more down to earth. Since he is a professional illustrator, I wanted him to have an outfit that reflects his easygoing nature and creativity. His T-shirt appears to have some sort of text on it, but it doesn't seem to be any language I recognise.



Viola

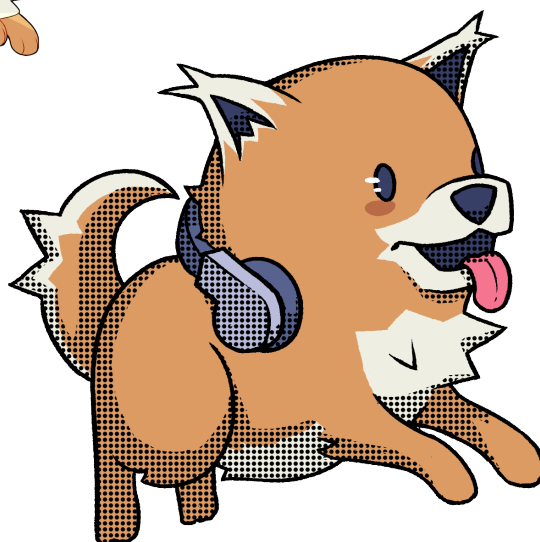


▶▶ Viola comes from further into the past than anyone else you meet in the game, so I wanted her appearance to reflect that. Given that she is (among other things) a travelling performer, I gave her a dramatic cape over one arm. She has not spent any time in Harbourtown when you first meet her, so her outfit doesn't have the same 1980's influence that everyone else's has.

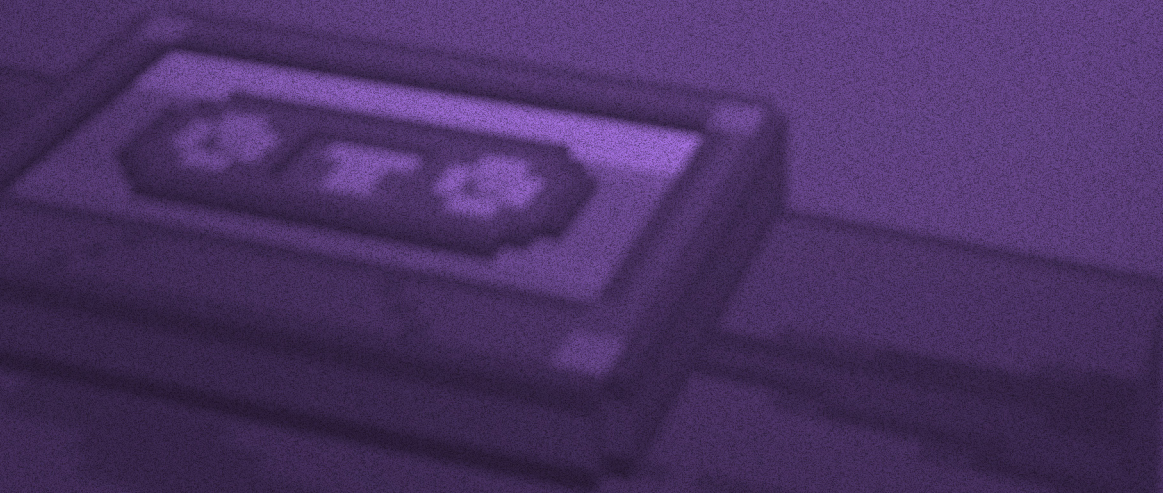


Barkley

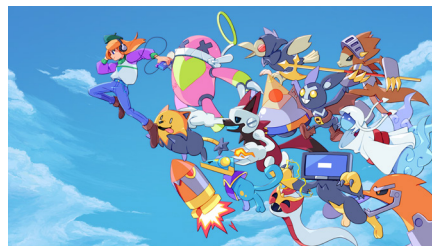
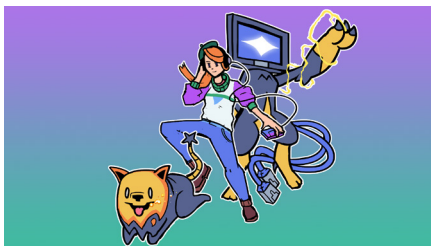
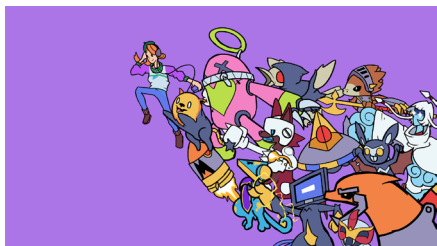
► ► *Barkley is a... pomeranian. What else is there to say? He is very cute, and we thought it would be fun to have an extra companion in who is a dog. His lack of speech made writing certain cutscenes a challenge, as he would not be able to interject to explain something that other companions would be able to.*



GAME DEVELOPMENT



Keyart



►► A game’s “key art” is the central piece of art used to promote and market the game, so it needs to be striking and memorable. After a few sketches and iterations I landed on a “rising formation”, where Kayleigh would be leaping through the sky with a trail of monsters from the game behind her. Sami Briggs then rendered it in the style of the game’s portraits, really making it pop. There’s not a whole lot of relevance to which monsters are featured other than “I thought they would look cool”. You’ll also notice that the two starter monsters aren’t in this art - that’s because I hadn’t finalised their designs when Sami drew the art! She later produced key art illustrations of Bansheep and Candevil for a trailer.

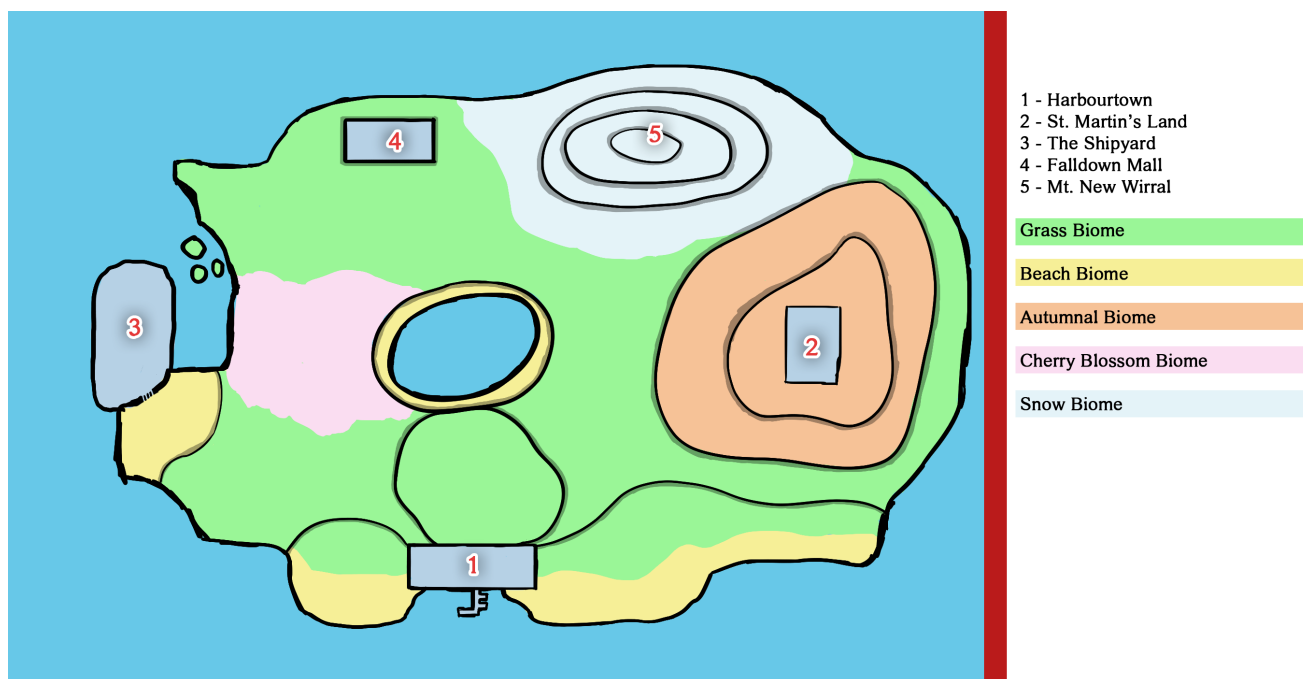
Logo



▶▶ The game's logo is also very important to the game's brand! I spend a while playing with different ideas and formats for it - some of these are very different from the final logo! Eventually I was drawn to the cassette tape with clouds emerging from it - this clarified the "cassette" in the name did indeed refer to cassette tapes, whilst the cloud wisp adds a sense of magic or mystery to it.

The final logo was produced by Raw Fury graphic designer Mai Dinh, who made many improvements - including the scratchy, energetic font for the text. I think the logo does a great job of selling the spirit of the game!

New Wirral



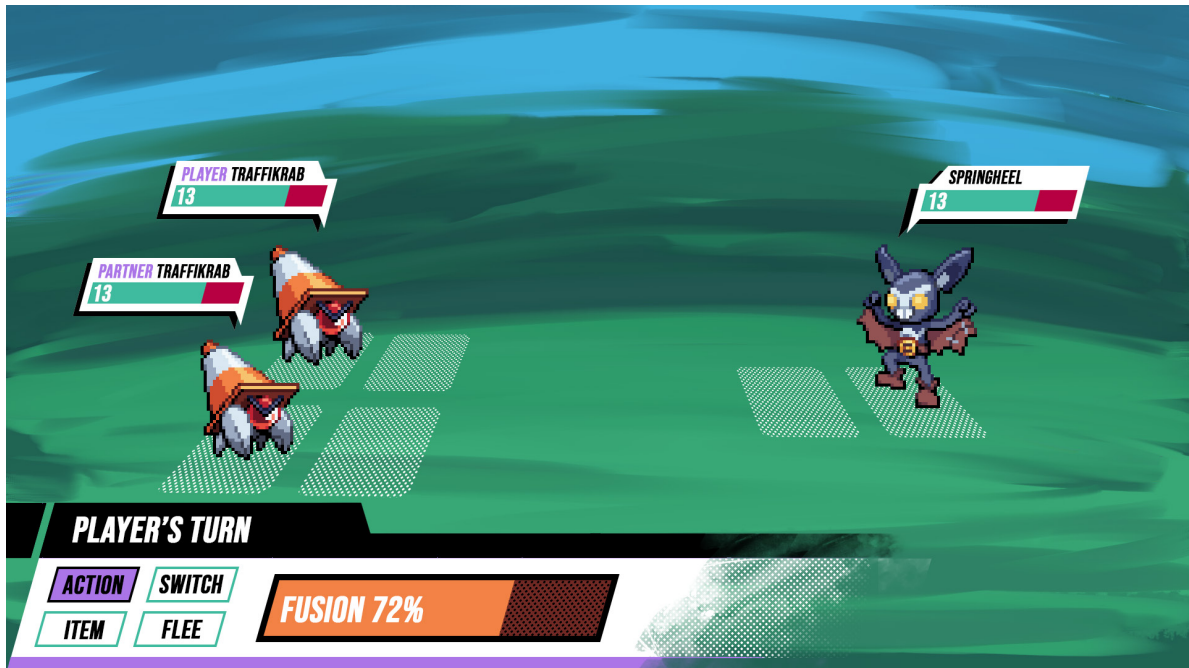
►► The island of New Wirral, named after the Wirral peninsula in the north-west of England, was a challenge to design. We aspired to create an open-world game environment with a tiny team! After some early sketches regarding the rough layout of the island, we started building a plan for the map. To make designing it manageable, we split it into a grid of square “chunks” that were arranged in a 16 x 8 grid. Each one of these chunks could be designed in isolation, and arranged together in the game engine. Whilst much of the island has a “grassy plains” look to it, we also planned for multiple other “biomes” to keep the world varied, such as an “autumn biome”, “arid biome” and so on. The final island was arranged with a sort of anti-clockwise progression to it - you progress round the map in a circle before finding your way back to the beginning.

► ► *Harbourtown is the central hub of the game, and therefore needed to be a place we spent a lot of time designing. The aesthetic of the town draws a lot from the town of Brighton (where Bytten Studio is based at the time of writing) with a British seaside town look. It is also intentionally a rather patchwork settlement - multiple tiers to the town and varied shapes of houses implies a history of villagers constantly extending the town's borders in response to new arrivals.*



Screen Mockups

►► We ended up producing a lot of screen mockups during the production of *Cassette Beasts* - these are rough, unpolished digital paintings of what certain scenes in the game may look like. There was a point early enough in production where the battle interface didn't look like a cassette player - strange to think about now, since that feature is one of the most memorable aspects of the game!



►► I did like the idea of the pause menu being styled to look like a vinyl cover sleeve, but ultimately it was more useful to include the world map on this screen so we didn't go with this idea.



Screen Mockups

►► *I also painted up several ideas for what our title screen may look like: I had it in mind from an early point to go with a subdued nature scene for this. When you play a game, it's interesting to think about how much thought went into deciding on every aspect of it - and to think about the huge amount of ideas that were not used in the final product (for one reason or another). Games take an incredible amount of work to make!*





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Illustrations, designs, and sketches are done by Jay Baylis unless otherwise stated

Keyart and companion portraits are done by Sami Briggs

CASSETTE BEASTS

